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In the fourth number of the first volume, we were casually led to notice a few traits of the feudal system observable in the military subordination of the combined armies who followed Agamemnon to the siege of Troy. There seems to be

not only a general resemblance, but very little difference, in the tendency of the political ideas of all savages, at similar epochs in their history. Whether we look at the ancient Hellenes, who colonized the north of Greece and the southern shores of the Hellespont; at the Germans; the Franks; the Chinese of origines; or the modern Tartars; from the narrations of all historians we are led to believe, that a numerous invasion of an ample, fertile region, by any other of these barbarous tribes, would be attended with similar consequences, as were the subversion of the western Empire, by two of them. Primitive alike in their modes of life; their roving dispositions, their food of the simplest kind, their wealth consisting in cattle; so were there notions of government the same; so are the tendencies of their notions the same, when developed by conquest:- and these notions are also primitive, as well as their manners and customs.

The subject which here presents itself, is boundless. We shall not be led away, to quote authorities or meddle with systems. Pursuing the

remarks made in the last number, we would barely notice the stamina of another form of government the feudal system, as found in the patriarchal economy.

This pyramid of polity, simple as strong, puts to confusion the arguments of those who would oppose that the natural equality of men renders a theoretical compact necessary; and would enable them to live independent of each other, if the earth were large enough to maintain them in such circumstances. Subordination seems natural to man in every grade and shadow of authority. Thus when a son left the home of his father, in the patriarchal era, and separated his flocks, his slaves, his fellowers and children, though he went into another country, and reaped the produce of another soil; while yet

The earth was all before them, where to choose, his allegiance to his father was never forgotten, and so it went down from generation to generation, while they dwelled into nations and empires; until tradition was lost in fable, and the superior lord or original patriarch had became the

God of their worship. But further, descending to the branches of a family, or the offspring of a mesne lord, a patriarchal family contained many different classes, and they were again subjected to individual families: and thus there were so many different grades of subordination, each person holding what he possessed immediately of one patriarch, and mediately of another; and so on, up to the highest.

As the government of all wandering tribes savours most strongly of the military or the patriarchal, or is a mixture of both, the mode in which the barbarians who overran Rome and her dominions, divided and enjoyed their conquests, seems a natural consequence of their conventional notions of subordination; and such as would find a parallel in the countries settled by any other roving tribe. But in ingenious modern author, + has very luminously shewn the conformation of the tenures and services among the Tartars to those of the Feudal System. And, if we read with attention that most ancient of records, the book of Genesis, we not only discern in

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the Patriarchal Government the outlines of that stupendous fabric of the Middle ages, but many, their features and distinct peculiarities. A few we will notice, as they occur in order of time.

I. The manner of life pursued by Lot and Abraham, as described by the sacred Historian, is very much like that of the ancient Gauls and Germans, as described by Cæsar and Tacitus; and particularly the latter.+ Their principal wealth consisted in cattle and their food would naturally be similar. Their habits of life are probably preserved by the Arabs, the nation who seem to possess neither flood or ebb, in civilization, even to this day.

II. In Genesis chapter 14th, we have an account of a war, waged by Chedorlaomer, king of Elam in Persia, against five princes who served him twelve years and in the thirteenth rebelled. If we

+ See Notes to Charles V. Vol I. Note VI, to Sec I. p 14.

acquire more than kings or barons, or gov: ernors of cities,+ became tributary or subservient to Chedalaomer; we can find no reason, unless we attribute it to conquest or to the protection he yielded them; or as is most probable, they were exempts from the tenure of his ancestors and the fealty and homage due to the Patriarchs observed, and was exacted by his descendants.

III. The king of Elam, in the title of victory having fallen on the Amalekites and Emorites and afterwards defeating the kings of Sodom & Gomorrah; Abraham armed his trained servants, born in his own house, to the number of 318, pursued the enemy and retook the captives, among the number of whom were Lot & his family. These servants were then the vassals of Abraham by birth, and were bound to arm in his defence and avenge his injuries. And there appears to have been a distinction between them and the captives taken in war, who also became vassals, but with inferior

+ Orton's Exposition

privileges. corresponding to the ..... in the feudal tenures. See Note IX. to the first volume of Roberts's Charles V.

IV. The King of Sodan demanded back his subjects; but Abraham kept the goods. Abraham generously refused to retain his own proportion; but said, "Let others, Ethod and Manre, which were with me, take their share. This was precisely the rule adopted by the barbarians who overturned the Roman empire in the west; among whom the booty was exactly distributed in certain proportions, after which the meanest soldier was not to be deprived against his consent of the smallest part of his plunder. and we are strongly reminded of the proud tenacity of the fellow, who when he was requested by Charlemagne to return a vase of value, to a church, which was thrown among the heap of his booty, struck the pile with his spear and insolently refused. † Abraham parted with his own division but had no power to give up the parts of his companions.

† Cha. V. Note VII to Sec I p 14.

V. For the sake of perspicuity, we notice again what we mentioned in speaking of the third feudal feature. In the seventeenth chapter of Genesis, we find a distinction taken among the servants of Abraham, between those born in his house, and bought with money from the stranger. These last were probably captives taken in war.† The king of Sodom requested of Abraham to restore his subjects to him. — seems to have considered it not as a right but as a matter of favour. The condition of such captives was not an odious slavery; yet naturally the servants born in the house looked upon them as their inferiors and their services were more menial.

Thus, besides many marked and coincident peculiarities, we may trace the grades of regular subordination, by which the fabric of feuds was cemented and consolidated in the features of the patriarchal government. In the latter the Deity was acknowledged as the Lord Paramount; the institution of sacrifices coeval with the creation, was an acknowl-

† Vide Expositor.

tedgment of the tenure by which mi held life and light and food from his bounty; and was the required service at their hands. We find Abraham, immediately after the victory just spoken of, paying tythes to Melchisedeck, Priest of the most High God, which though a religious rite, had a civil bearing and tendency —.

Viewing these features in another light, we may, without straining the point, conceive the outlines of an aristocracy, and of a republic. As the children of a Patriarch advanced in years and became with respect to their own dependents, Patriarchs. In matters of importance or exigency, their counsel must have been respected, in proportion as their cooperation was necessary. This conveys the idea of an oligarchy or aristocracy; and if we view them as the natural representatives of their families, we conceive the system of a republic.

It must however be acknowledged

ged, that this last is the most imperfect in its resemblance; and when we know from history, that it was never the first in practice, we are strongly led to refer all governments to the patriarchal, as their grand prototype and original.

It were idle vanity, however, from a few indigested remarks to deduce a consequence, involving a decision of a question, agitated time whereof mens memory runneth not to the contrary; and by men of the most profound research and acute discernment. +

Referring however to scripture, where we find so ample an account of the patriarchal government; believing that the family of only one patriarch survived the deluge; viewing in connection with each other, the gregarious nature of men, their intuitive abhorrence of incest; the length of time necessary to mature their faculties; and the habit of obedience cen-

+ For their names, Vide Eunomus. Vol II.

ting from these two causes; simple as it are, we are left in wonder when we find that learned men have never agreed on the earliest forms of government: we believe an original compact solemnly entered into between a multitude of independent individuals, anterior to the any civil Society, practically absurd and impossible; and we do not understand how it is theoretically necessary, to support natural law, or how the want of it affects the absolute rights of individuals.

Finally in concluding our recapitulation, when we observe in the patriarchal government the germs of all others, and find that the most prominent are earliest developed in the history of the experiments of nations, we are induced to conclude that from that original fountain all the different streams of government have flowed, taking into different channels, as they were influenced by that law, which we have called by another author, the habit of obedience; and that however

they may have been affected by political accidents they yet preserve enough of their original flavour, to mark with definite precision their source.

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